

## Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Crime is a serious concern in Windhoek and other areas throughout Namibia. Robberies, muggings, and thefts occur frequently, especially in downtown shopping areas and locations where foreign visitors tend to congregate.

American visitors to Namibia have regularly fallen victim to street crime. Incidents occur more frequently after dark than during daytime hours. In most incidents, victims who surrender their belongings without resistance survive the encounter unharmed. Criminals sometimes display knives and occasionally firearms. The Namibian Police recently established a Tourist Protection Unit, but they continue to be severely hampered by resource constraints that hinder effective deterrence of crime.

The most common incidents are non-violent crimes of opportunity, committed by thieves who rely on stealth and surprise, such as pick-pocketing, purse-snatching, cloning of credit cards, vehicle theft, and vehicle break-ins. Common sense measures, such as not leaving valuables in parked cars, safeguarding purses, keeping wallets in front pockets, and being alert to one's surroundings, are the best deterrents against crime. Visitors should not leave valuables unsecured in their rooms. If you use a key fob to lock your vehicle door, double check your doors by physically trying the handle. The vast majority of crime that now occurs in Windhoek is petty street crime.

Americans visiting Windhoek should not expect to experience any hostility or aggression because of their citizenship. In fact, the atmosphere for Americans is generally welcoming. Americans who visit Namibia are encouraged to register on the State Department website before travelling or with the Consular Section at the Embassy, as well as to review the most recent Country Specific Information sheet on Namibia at <http://travel.state.gov>.

## Crime Threats

Theft from motor vehicles remains a concern in all major cities. These types of crimes usually involve smash and grab patterns and are sometimes associated with violence. Personal robberies and residential break-ins and thefts remain prevalent.

## Road Safety

Driving can be very hazardous in Namibia. Traffic fatalities among foreign visitors are frequent. Although major roads are generally very well maintained, Namibia's network of gravel secondary roads can be treacherous, particularly during the rainy season. Defensive driving is essential to safely manage road conditions and the excessive speed used by many drivers. Driving at night outside urban areas is dangerous, as unlit roads make it difficult to see road obstructions and the large animals that frequently cross the roads. Visitors planning to drive outside Windhoek should plan to arrive at their destination before dark. Vehicles should be in top condition and equipped with spare tires and one should bring plenty of water, food, and emergency medical supplies. Drivers in urban areas should be aware that taxis often stop abruptly to pick up and discharge passengers, resulting in frequent rear-end collisions.

Namibian police checkpoints are positioned approximately 15 kilometers outside the principal cities and towns on all major highways. During the holiday season, additional checkpoints are sometimes established along the Windhoek- Swakopmund highway and near medium-sized towns. Most vehicles are allowed to proceed without inspection, but drivers should be prepared to produce vehicle registration

documents, personal identification (passport, Namibian identification cards), car rental contracts, and/or drivers' licenses on request. All drivers should plan to stop and proceed only when waved through. Police have fired "warning shots" at vehicles ignoring roadblocks.

### Regional Terrorism and Organized Crime

Namibia is rated low for indigenous terrorism. No incidents with terrorism-related links have been reported. No reports have been received from official sources about the presence of known regional terrorist groups in Namibia. There are no known organized criminal groups in Namibia. Individuals sometimes group together for a specific criminal activity but they are often apprehended during or after these incidents which are mainly robberies from vehicles carrying cash to or from banks or businesses. During 2009, the Prevention of Organized Crime Act and the Financial Intelligence Act entered into force, which are laws aimed at the suppression of organized crime, money laundering, and terrorist financing.

### Kidnappings

Very few incidents of kidnapping have been reported in the past. However, the few that were reported were not politically motivated but rather criminal or related to domestic disagreements. No major incidents of kidnapping against foreigners were reported.

### Drug and Narcoterrorism

Namibia is not a drug producing country. Most of the drugs that are locally available are illegally smuggled into the country. The drug of choice is marijuana and is relatively cheap. Other types of drugs such as cocaine, crack cocaine and heroin are also available. Namibia is being used as a transit route for drugs destined for countries in the region and elsewhere. Anti-drug laws are strictly enforced and no bail is granted without a court appearance. This applies to both drug sellers and users. A very cheap, but destructive drug in the form of methamphetamine (commonly known by the street name "tik") is becoming more popular and is readily available.

### Police Response

Local police lack the resources, training, and personnel required to effectively deter street crime, and to fully respond and investigate reported crimes. Long-term visitors should register with the Embassy and report to the Embassy if they are detained or arrested. Travelers should not challenge the authority of police or soldiers. U.S. Embassy Windhoek maintains excellent relations with the national and local police forces. During an emergency, visitors to Namibia should contact the local police in their area.

### How to handle incidents of police detention and harassment

Under Namibian law, any law enforcement officer is required to produce credentials and identify himself before carrying out a lawful arrest. Whenever an arrest is imminent it is advisable to comply with the arresting officer's request. An arrested person has the right to contact his legal representative. The police are obliged to afford the arrested person an opportunity to contact his/her family and/or legal representative. Incidents of police harassment can be reported to any police station, the office of the Inspector-General of Police, or the Office of the Ombudsman.

### Where to turn for assistance if you become a victim of a crime

The Namibian police department recently opened a Tourist Protection Unit (TPU) to assist tourists who have become victims of crime. As a pilot project, TPUs were established first in the Khomas and Erongo regions and subsequently will be expanded to all 13 regions. The Tourist Protection Unit in Windhoek is located at the corner of Independence Avenue and Bahnhof Street.

Contact numbers (emergency/non-emergency):

Windhoek

Police: 10111 /209-4111

Fire/Ambulance: 211-111

Outside Windhoek	POLICE	FIRE
Swakopmund:	064-10111/402431	4104299/081-1285613
Mariental:	063-10111345000	245600/242211
Luderitz:	063-10111/202255	202255
Gobabis:	062-10111/566100	566666/081-1244936
Tsumeb:	067-10111/2235017	221004/081-1248677
Rundu:	066-10111/266300	081-257543
Oshakati:	065-10111/223600	229500/081-2963300
Otjiwarongo:	067-10111/300600	081-2022222

### Medical Emergencies

Windhoek has a number of adequate medical facilities and medical evacuation companies, including:  
Medi-Clinic Hospital in Windhoek  
(061-222687)

Roman Catholic Hospital  
(061-2702911)

International SOS (private ambulance and medical evacuation)  
061-230505  
081-129-6300  
112 from a local cell phone

Windhoek Municipal Emergency Services  
(061-290-2702)

For medical emergencies outside Windhoek, visit the closest hospital in the region. For serious injuries, medevacs throughout Namibia may be arranged through ISOS offices located in Windhoek, Tsumeb, Kombat, Otjiwarongo, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund:

The telephone numbers for International SOS (ISOS):

Tsumeb:	081-1285501
Kombat:	081-1285501
Otjiwarongo:	081-1296300

Swakopmund: 064-200-200  
Walvis Bay: 064-200-200

U.S. Embassy Windhoek	(+264-61) 295-8500	
Post One	(+264-61) 295-8501	Regional Security Officer
(+264-61) 295-8564	cell: 081-129-1078	
Assistant Regional Security Officer	(+264-61) 295-8517	cell: 081-140-5447
Foreign Service National Investigator	(+264-61) 295-8514	cell: 081-122-9823